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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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DESP. NO.

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January 28, 1952
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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - January 14 - January 26, 1952

SUMMARY

The only important news of the period reported upon was the appointment of members of the new 19-man central Council of Ministers composed of the Governor, as president, six ex-officio members, and twelve Nigerian members, four from each region. Regional ministers were also appointed, and portfolios (both central and regional) were distributed.

The Council of Ministers, established as of January 24, 1952, is the highest executive body under the new constitution, and its first meeting was on January 26, 1952.

The opening meeting of the new House of Representatives was on January 29, 1952.

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POLITICAL

The New Ministers are Now Appointed.

The twelve Nigerians who will form the new central Council of Ministers under the new constitution have now been appointed, and have been confirmed by the several Regional Legislatures. The Council consists of the Governor, as president, six ex-officio members, and the twelve Nigerians (four from each region), mentioned above. These, together with portfolios held, are as follows. Nine of the twelve Nigerians in the Council hold portfolios:

PORTFOLIO	MINISTER
Labour	Hon. S. L. Akintola
Works	Hon. M. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa
Communications	Hon. Chief A. E. Prest
Transport	Hon. Chief Bode Thomas
Commerce and Industries	Hon. A. C. Nwapa

(cont.)

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PORTFOLIO	MINISTER
Mines and Power	Hon. E. Njoku
Natural Resources	Hon. M. Mohammadu Ribadu, M.B.E.
Social Services	Hon. Shettima Kashim, M.B.E.
Lands Survey and Local Development	Hon. O. Arikpo

The following ministers will be without portfolio:

Hon. Alhaji, the Honorable Usuman Nagogo, C.B.E., Emir of Katsina.
Hon. Sir Adesoji Aderemi, K.B.E., C.M.G., the Oni of Ife.
Hon. Dr. E.M.L. Endeley.

All four of the new central Ministers from the Western Region are Action Group men. These are:

Sir Adesoji Aderemi, the Oni of Ife.
Chief Bode Thomas
Chief Arthur Prest
Barrister S. L. Akintola

Most of the regional ministers have also been appointed. No special importance attaches to central or regional ministers except the foregoing.

It is generally felt that Mr. Akintola's job, as Minister of Labour, is the most unenviable one of the Council, as there are many important labour questions still to be settled.

The central Council of Ministers is Nigeria's highest executive body under the new constitution. The twelve Nigerian ministers will henceforth have the right, within the Council, to participate in discussions leading to the crystallization of government policy. They outrank (British) heads of departments.

The first meeting of the Council of Ministers was held on January 26, 1952, in a new building in Government House compound in Lagos.

The six ex-officio members of the Council of Ministers are as follows:

Name	Position
Hon. A.E.T. Benson	*Minister of Defense and External Affairs
Hon. H. F. Marshall	Lt.Gov. Western Region
Hon. Capt. B. E. Sharwood-Smith	Lt. Gov. Northern Region

(cont.)

Name	Position
Hon. Sir James Pyke-Knott	Lt.Gov. Eastern Region
Hon. Andly McKisack	**Minister of Justice
Hon. E. Himsworth	***Minister of Finance

*Also functions as Chief Secretary of the Government.
**Also functions as Attorney General.
***Also functions as Financial Secretary.

New House of Representatives Opens January 29, 1952.

The new central House of Representatives will be opened officially on January 29, 1952, in a new building in Lagos.

Awalowo Challenges Azikiwe's Political Stature in Nigeria.

It appears that Dr. Azikiwe is no longer the most important politician in Nigeria, now that he has been rejected for the Central House, and since two of his NCNC stalwarts, Nimbe and Adedoyin, have left the party, thereby decreasing his prestige still further. Due to the constant use here of the most devious methods of accomplishing political projects, and because of lack of discipline within political parties, the writer has been of the opinion that a way would still be found to get Zik to the Central House. The press indicates, in that connection, that up to £10,000 cash has been offered to one of the Lagos personnel elected to the Central House from the Western Legislature, if he will step down in favor of Zik. This apparently means one of three things: (1) The money was not actually laid on the line, (2) the person concerned can't be bought, or (3) that person collected from both sides. In any case, up to the present time, there has been no further talk of Zik reaching the Central House. It appears to be an accepted fact, at this writing, that he will not do so.

Zik's political star seems to have been totally eclipsed by Mr. Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the Action Group, but this is a land of surprises and nothing is ever very certain for long. It is, however, a foregone conclusion that Awolowo's followers, who now have a decided majority in the Western House, will move heaven and earth to prevent Zik from reaching the Central House and from later becoming a Minister somehow. Awolowo is now the undisputed leader of the AG majority party in the Western House. His party will not have a clear majority in the Central House, but he is certain to exercise considerable influence over representatives of all three regions. It seems probable that independent and other members from the Eastern and Northern Houses may find in the Action Group the sort of program they can support, and may, accordingly come to terms with the latter.

Awolowo, a relative newcomer to politics, seems likely to

be an important politician for some time to come in Nigeria, as he appears to know how to organize and how to make and maintain alliances. He lacks Dr. Azikiwe's popular appeal, but has other assets, such as a complete political and economic program.

In any case Zik is an astute politician and this writer is not prepared to count him out for some time to come. A way still may be found to get him to the center and even make him a Minister, as he is a wily and intelligent hombre that knows his way around.

At the moment, at least, Awolowo is the man of the hour.

Awolowo, Head of AG, is Reported Unwilling to Accept a Ministerial Post in Central House.

Awolowo prefers to remain in the Western Region Legislature where he can devote full time to affairs of the region. He has been appointed Minister of Local Government in the Western Region.

Whither "Zik"?

There is much conjecture as to what course Dr. Azikiwe will take, now that he has been rejected by the Western Legislature for the Central House of Representatives. He could, of course, change his political tactics, or he could retire from public life. He is still an ordinary member of the Western Legislature (leader of the opposition), but whether he will be satisfied to remain in that position is not known. Certainly his political prestige has declined considerably, as has his party, the NCNC. In his newspapers he will have more time to criticize the actions and decisions of the Central Legislature and this is expected. He can and will say that if he were in power he would do this or that, and, accordingly, heckle the Government effectively. Many British and Africans feel that it would have been wiser to send Zik to the Central Legislature. Then, being a part of the Central Government, he would not be likely to critidize as extensively and in the same manner as he can as an outsider. It seems probable that Zik still has and will retain many followers, as he is a nationally known character. When he goes out on the streets, the crowds invariably cry out "Zik" in an endearing and worshipful manner.

The tension in the political atmosphere continues and speculation is rife as to the continued existence of the NCNC as a political force now that two of the three big guns of the party (Nimbe and Adedoyin) have left it. Many believe that it may not survive the crisis.

To the writer it seems most unfortunate that Dr. Azikiwe, the best known Nigerian politician and chief advocate of a strong central government, should at this stage find himself out of the central legis re.

Expulsion of Dr. Olorun-Nimbe from the NCNC Political Party and Resignation of Prince Adedoyin from NCNC Raise Speculations in Lagos.

The main question is whether Nimbe will join the Action Group. He does not have much to fear from expulsion from NCNC since he is safely elected to the House of Representatives for five years, and can rebuild his political fences in that period. Old political friends believe that he will not join the Action Group, but function as an independent from now on.

Prince Adedoyin, a central minister, resigned his membership in the NCNC, but it is understood now that his resignation has not been accepted.

Nimbe has also been expelled from the National Democratic Party, an offshoot of the NCNC. He now is a man without a party.

Various NCNC Members of Western House Are Said to be Deserting Their Party.

Since the first meeting of the new Western House, when the Action Group demonstrated its decided majority in the House, a number of NCNC members are reported to have deserted their party and joined the stronger AG (group.) It is of some importance here, as elsewhere, to get on the bandwagon, or get one's money on the right horse.

New Lieutenant Governors Appointed.

Mr. H. F. Marshall, now functioning as Administrative Secretary to the Government of Nigeria, has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of the Western Region, replacing Sir Chandos Hoskyns-Abrahall who is retiring. In the Northern Region, Captain B. E. Sharwood-Smith, Senior Resident, has been appointed Lieutenant Governor in succession to Captain Sir Eric Thompstone who is also retiring.

Acceptance of Ministerial Appointments by Native Rulers Criticized by Opposition.

The NCNC points out that various native rulers of the West have broken the ancient tradition of their fathers by accepting ministerial appointments to "serve with commoners" in assembly meetings, and to receive stipends, just as commoners do.

Northern Peoples Congress to Cooperate with Action Group.

The men who will represent Northern Nigeria in the House of Representatives are reported to have joined the NPC, and the latter has announced that it will cooperate with the AG because its aims are identical.

The Western House of Chiefs Has Eleven Chiefs Who Cannot Speak or Understand English, the Language in Which the Houses Affairs are Conducted.

If no arrangement is made (none to date) for the use of interpreters, their contributions to the work of the House will be negligible. Some have suggested that the House might adopt a bilingual form of expression, with a common interpreter.

Eastern Region May Petition for a House of Chiefs.

There is some chance that the Eastern Region may request amendment of the new constitution to provide for a House of Chiefs in the East similar to those which now exist in the Northern and Western Regions. If this comes to pass, it will be a long-term project and almost surely will not come into existence during the five-year term of the current regional legislatures.

Relative Status of British and Native Officers.

"Disparate" salaries and allowances paid British and native officers have been the subject of attack in Lagos during the past two weeks. One report is to the effect that West African native commissioned officers have contacted a Labor MP requesting that he demand an explanation from the War Office regarding the status of British and native officers of the Royal West African Frontier Force. The immediate cause of the current discussion was an increase in the salaries of the African officers in Nigeria which was, to an undetermined extent, offset by reductions in allowances paid these same officers.

CPP of Nigeria Continues Organizational Activity.

An open meeting of the CPP of Nigeria was held on Friday, January 18, 1952. Mr. O. C. Agwuna, secretary, defined the party as a "Socialist and Political Movement in West Africa drawn to the appetite of oppressed people". The aim of the party "is to fight relentlessly for the achievement of a free Government in Nigeria and the Cameroons". Other pet phrases: "Equal pay for equal work, "organize and unite all sections of the community", "Socialist Independent Republic of West Africa", "call for great courage, strict discipline, spirit of endurance and conviction", "imperialism", "foreign capitalism".

Agwuna stated "The CPP of Nigeria, an autonomous body, is not a branch of the Gold Coast CPP."

ECONOMIC

Cotton and Peanut Purchases Slowed by Shortage of Small Coins.

Despite bumper crops of cotton and peanuts, purchases of these two crops has been proceeding very slowly. A major reason for ---

this fact is the current shortage of one-shilling coins in Northern Nigeria. Small quantities were sent into Kano, Nigeria by air, but full availability is still awaiting arrival of sea shipments and restoration of full railway service following the recent strike.

Five Men and a Woman Make Cocoa Film in West Africa for a Dutch Manufacturer of Chocolate Products.

This group has made a film telling the story of cocoa from planting of the tree to final consumption. The interested firm is C. J. Van Houten & Sons, Weesp, Netherlands, which firm is reported to have been the inventors of the drink cocoa, made from dry cocoa powder, in 1828. The firm also produces cocoa butter.

U.S. Car Imports Attacked by West African Pilot.

The West African Pilot, Lagos daily newspaper, has attacked the importation of American automobiles, recently announced by Government, as a misuse of precious dollar resources and strongly contends that these dollars would be much better used in purchase of other hard-to-get items, such as tractors and telephone equipment.

OTHER

Lebanese Population in Nigeria.

The Lebanese Consul, Mr. Hassan Osseiran, estimates that the total Lebanese population in Nigeria is 2,000 and that 700 of them reside in Lagos.

Two Pakistan Delegates to Presidential Celebrations in Monrovia Spend Three Days in Nigeria.

These are Dr. Mahmoda Hasan, Joint Secretary of the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Brigadier Hamid Husan, also of the Foreign Office. They were guests at Government House and came here to see certain public works and to contact the Muslim people in Kano.

Dr. Mellanby to Leave University College.

Dr. Kenneth Mellanby, O.B.E., Sc.D., the first Principal of University College, Ibadan, will leave Nigeria next year. Dr. Mellanby accepted office for a minimum period of five years. Dr. Mellanby has informed the Council that he does not wish the period of his appointment to be extended beyond July 1952, but after consultations with a Committee of the Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, he has consented to remain in office for a limited further period of the academic year 1952-53, in order to supervise

the transfer of the College from its temporary site into the new buildings which are now being erected on the new site as its permanent home.

The announcement of Dr. Mellanby's decision to leave the University College was reviewed editorially by the Nigerian Tribune of Ibadan, January 23. While praising Dr. Mellanby for his pioneering zeal and the high standards he sought to maintain, the Tribune pointed out that he had been severely criticized for an attitude toward the African staff which was not "exceedingly attractive".

Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) Urges Nigerian Government to Take Advantage of Technical Assistance Offered by UN.

Meeting in Ijebu Ode the week of January 13, the Nigerian Union of Teachers, in its annual conference, urged the Government of Nigeria to "endeavor to secure for the benefit of this country technical assistance available under the technical aid program of the United Nations and its specialized agencies".

The NUT conference urged Government to take the necessary steps to make Nigeria an associate member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; noted with interest the arrangements made to open in 1952 the Western and Northern branches of the College of Arts, Science and Technology; and congratulated the teachers elected to the Regional as well as the Central legislatures, "trusting" that the legislators would "seek the NUT's cooperation in the formulation and implementation of a satisfactory educational program for Nigeria."

The Conference noted that at least one-fourth of the members of the Western and Eastern Houses are teachers.

A. W. Childs
Consul General

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